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ABSTRACT

This package, which can be used on an individual or group basis, introduces basic leadership skills which are essential for conducting successful workshops. The twelve topics covered by the package are as follows: (1) initial contact to set up workshop; (2) preworkshop activities; (3) conducting the workshop; (4) opening remarks; (5) introducing the instructional materials; (6) delivery skills; (7) modifying the workshop; (8) pacing skills; (9) discussion leader skills; (10) sensitivity to participants; (11) feedback skills; and (12) group dynamics. A needs assessment exercise is presented at the beginning of the package. (Author/AL)

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# DELIVERABLE

# EVALUATION TECHNOLOGIES PROGRAM:

# EVALUATION PRACTICES

EDYS QUELLMALZ
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## FIELD DRAFT OF LEADER'S PACKAGE

## CSE WORKSHOP SERIES

CM 820 006

CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF EVALUATION
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At one time or another we have all attended workshops, some of which were very good and some of which were a waste of time. Think back to a successful workshop you've attended. Why was it useful or enjoyable? Perhaps the topic of the workshop was relevant to your job. Perhaps the materials were interesting and presented well. It is also likely that the session went smoothly. Just where the workshop began to drag, the leader probably picked up the pace. When everyone wanted to discuss an important point, the leader did not cut the discussion off. In short, the workshop leader probably showed an interest in the workshop, knowledge of the workshop's content, and a sense of what the group was feeling. While your personal interest in the topic of the workshop and the quality of the materials contributed to the workshop's success, the workshop leader was the orchestrator of that success.

What qualities add up to a good workshop leader? Is leading a workshop an art? Yes, to a certain extent. Are there techniques and skills one can learn to be an effective leader? Most definitely, yes. This package introduces basic leadership skills we feel are essential for conducting successful workshops.

## Exercise 1: Needs Assessment

**Purpose:** Needs assessment for the package. Leader can use results to tailor package to suit participant group.

**Format:** Individual and team. Participants work individually to rand order the topics presented in the workshop. The team then computes team means for each topic.

**Directions:** The following list includes the 12 topics covered in the LTP. Which topic(s) would you most like to cover today? Which do you feel are less important?

Rank order the 12 topics. Assign a rank of 1 to the topic in which you are most interested and a rank of 12 to the topic that is of the least interest to you.

When you have finished, compare your rankings with those of your team members. For each topic, determine a team rank by averaging the rankings each member gave to the topic.

| TOPIC | RANK | TEAM RANK |
|---|---|---|
| 1) Initial contact to set up workshops | | |
| 2) Preworkshop activities: contacting participants | | |
| 3) Conducting the workshop: inventory checklist, greeting participants, team assignments, introductions | | |
| 4) Opening remarks: establishing credibility | | |
| 5) Introducing the instructional materials: notebooks, pretests, and posttests, objectives | | |
| 6) Delivery Skills: use of leader's material; style; interacting with groups | | |
| 7) Modifying the workshop: determining the needs of the audience | | |
| 8) Pacing skills | | |
| 9) Discussion leader skills | | |
| 10) Sensitivity to participants: facilitating leader behaviors | | |
| 11) 11) feedback skills: giving and receiving feedback. | | |
| 12) Group dynamics: coping with problem individuals and groups | | |

EXERCISE 1: Needs Assessment

At the conclusion of the exercise a person from each team should write the final team rankings on the board. If there is a trend in the rankings (e.g., same topics are ranked high by all groups) the leader can take appropriate action. There are several options including:

1. emphasizing sections which are ranked high
2. de-emphasizing sections which are ranked low
3. reorganize order in which the sections are presented. Those ranked high might be interspersed with others, placed at strategic points such as after a low ranked section

Persons reading the LTP as a manual could complete the individual part of the exercise if they desired. This would serve as a formal personal needs assessment. They may have already glanced at the table contents and decided to read some sections before others; skip some sections. If they've done this they've already conducted an informal personal needs assessment.

## PRE-WORKSHOP

### Role of the Leader

When workshop organizers seek a leader for conducting the session, they may look for either an internal or external person for the role. An internal leader would be someone within the organization that works with or is familiar with the participant group. If there is no appropriate leader within the group, an external leader would be called in. The external person might be a person familiar with the particular workshop or someone with expertise on the subject matter.

The internal leader has an advantage in that knowing the group might put him in a more informed position. This leader would probably know how much knowledge the participants have, their feelings about the workshop, and therefore which participants are more likely to be interested, bored, etc. These factors would be unknown and therfore a potential handicap to the external leader. However, the external leader may have an advantage in that he can be more objective in his relationship to the group and not be influenced by preconceived ideas about the personalities, attitudes, and behaviors of particular members and may be more apt to be perceived as an expert.

### Initial Meeting with Contact

The initial meeting between the workshop leader and the contact who set up the workshop, or is speaking for the one who did, is important to clarify all aspects of the workshop.

The list of questions below should act as a guideline for those areas that require clarification before the leader accepts the responsibility of

conducting the workshop.

1. *Who is the sponsor?* E.g., district, state, special group?
2. *How much responsibility does the leader have to the sponsor?* Does the sponsor require: a report at the end of the workshop? Pre and posttest information? (should at least be anonymous)
3. *Was the workshop requested/mandated?* This information will give the leader a better idea of the possible attitudes to expect from the participants. If they are part of a group that desired more information on a topic and requested the workshop, the leader might assume an enthusiastic response to him and the materials. If the participants are present only as the result of a mandate from on high, the response might be less than enthusiastic, even mixed or downright hostile.
4. *How much current evaluation related tasks have participants been involved in?* This information will allow the leader time to think of how to apply the workshop to the particular evaluation situation of the participants.
5. *What is the stated purpose of the workshop?* What does the sponsor see as the goals of the workshop? General goals, e.g., learn more about concepts of evaluation in order to inform other staff members, or specific goals, e.g., gain evaluation expertise to better write reports for funding agencies. The leader should also make sure the goals of the workshop materials coincide with the goals requested and envisioned by the sponsors. The leader may conduct a fine workshop but have a very unhappy sponsor when it becomes obvious that

the participants didn't learn, or experience what the sponsor wanted.

6. *Is there an unstated purpose (hidden agenda) for the workshop?* There may be purposes for the workshop which are not readily apparent to the potential leader. If the leader is internal he may be privy to extraneous information that could reveal other possible intents, e.g., opportunity for various groups in the district to interact, general inservice that looks good on the record but no special interest in particular workshop. The external leader can try to acquire this most interesting information through questions (What made you decide on this topic for a workshop? Is this fulfiljing any inservice requirements?) Or he may hope to overhear pertinent gossip.

7. *Who will take the responsibility to set up the workshop?* Setting up might include room arrangements, notifying participants, and other administrative details.

8. *What are the workshop requirements?* If the workshop to be presented has requirements (e.g., CSE -- 2 day workshop with attendance required for both days, intended for naive audience) will the sponsor guarantee to try and meet these requirements?

You might have noticed the above concerns are similar to those an evaluator must face in the first meeting with decision makers. In both cases, it is highly recommended that responsibilities are clearly delineated.

The particular questions the leader asks will vary depending on whether the leader is internal or external, but the information the leader should emerge with from the meeting is the same.

## Preworkshop Activities

Once you, as a leader, have made a commitment to lead a workshop, there are a number of tasks to complete before the day of the workshop session.

1. *Participants must be contacted (either by you or the sponsor, depending on the agreement).* The letter may be an announcement of the workshop seeking participants or a letter of introduction to each participant stating how or why the participant was selected. Both types of letters should contain information on the purpose and general topic of the workshop and on where and when the workshop will be held, luncheon arrangements, participant requirements.
2. *Remind participants (phone, letter) of the workshop one week before the workshop.*
3. *Select and brief any assistants.* If assistants are to be used, make sure their role is clear. Are they to act as aides -- passing out notebooks, pencils, tests; obervers -- recording comments and time data, listening to team interactions; or as co-leaders -- interjecting comments and conducting part of the workshop?
4. *Check room, lunch and refreshment arrangements.* The best workshop can be a disaster if trivial details are not taken care of, e.g., enough chairs in the room, lists of suggestions for possible luncheon places, refreshments for breaks.
5. *Familiarize yourself with the workshop materials.* Even if you have given the workshop before, review the materials, both the Participant's Notebook and the Leader's Manual. A leader's manual is best used as a reference, not as a script to be read to participants.

Be thoroughly familiar with the format of the Leader's Manual so that you can easily find any information without having to be constantly following it. Try not to read the text verbatim. A leader is more effective if he can "talk to" rather than "read to" his audience (more on use of Leader's Manual is described in Leadership Skills section).

## CONDUCTING THE WORKSHOP

### Preparations for Participants

Before participants arrive:

1. Be early to check the room set-up (even if it wasn't your responsibility) including tables, chairs, refreshments.
2. Use inventory checklist to check that all materials needed to conduct the workshop are present.
3. If contact/sponsor is present, inquire if he wishes to speak to group at the beginning (may have announcements).

When participants arrive:

1. Have participants sign in and take name tags. If the group is heterogeneous, from different areas, divisions, offices, it is also suggested to have their affiliation written under their name. Unless all the group members, including the leader, know each other by first name, name tags can be very useful. There is no embarressment of forgetting persons who should be familiar, they allow the leader to call on people by name (much better than "you over there"), and may help participants initiate conversations.

2. Start the session. Wait 5-10 minutes after scheduled start time if everyone is not there. Allow sponsor to make any extra workshop announcements.

3. Announce daily details. Tell participants where to find restrooms and coffee. Negotiate time and place of lunch and coffee breaks. These may be set at definite times, or better yet, left flexible so they can take place when there are convenient breaks in the workshop materials.

4. Ask participants for introductions. If the participants are very familiar with each other, introductions may not be necessary. But do not assume that participants know each other just because they work in the same district, building or department. Introductions may still be worthwhile - even if it is mostly to give you information about each person and help you start attaching names to faces. Have each person state their name, job, and responsibilities.

An alternative introduction method, especially useful with large groups, is to have participants get up, walk around and introduce themselves to as many people as they can within a specified time (or minutes). This allows people to mingle and helps to loosen up the atmosphere.

## Starting the Workshop

### Opening Remarks

1. Establish your credibility, tell participants your background and the background of your organization or department, your credentials, and experience.

2. Explain the workshop sturcture. This might include such things as attendence requirements and purpose of teams.
3. Encourage discussion. Even if the workshop is a highly structured session, as in the CSE workshops, participants should be encouraged to make comments, share relevant experiences, and ask questions. It is difficult for a leader, especially with an unfamiliar group, to get a feel for how well the workshop is going without participant reaction. This will be discussed more in the section on pacing.
4. Tell participant why you are leading the workshop. Give your perception of why you are there and what you hope participants will come away with (learn or feel) as a result of the workshop.

The following exercise will give people taking the LTP practice in recognizing their expectations for workshop sessions.

EXERCISE 2:

Purpose: Help participants put themselves in the role of a workshop leader.

Format: Individual and team.

Directions: Work alone and list three things you hope participants will come away with (learn or feel) as a result of a CSE workshop you might give. When you've finished compare your list with those compiled by your teammates.

At the conclusion of the exercise the leader could ask each team to report on what they hoped participants would learn as a result of a CSE workshop they conducted. The leader should point out that the outcomes of the workshops can be:

1. cognitive
2. attitudinal
3. short range
4. long range
5. group process outcomes

For those who may use the LTP as a self-instructional manual, the following written feedback of possible responses is provided:

1. Cognitive
   - knowledge of general evaluation concepts
   - knowledge of evaluation techniques and skills
   - knowledge of specific phases of evaluation activity (e.g., data collection, analysis)
2. Attitudinal
   - more positive attitude toward evaluation
   - more confident in conducting an evaluation

- more willing to engage in evaluation
- more positive attitude toward in-service workshops
- more positive attitudes toward workshop leaders

3. Short range
   - immediate cognitive and attitudinal changes as measured by posttests and reaction sheets
   - immediate group process outcomes (e.g., more congeniality between participants)

4. Long range
   - impact on future evaluations participants may perform. Skills and techniques learned in the workshop will be put into practice
   - participants work together on projects when they return to their jobs

5. Group process
   - participants are more comfortable and relaxed around each other
   - participants know more about what other people in their district do
   - participants are more willing to interact and work with each other

Assumes a homogeneous group

Materials Introduction

1. Distribute materials. This can be done either by you or your assistant, or, in large groups, by having one member from each team come up and take the materials for the team.
2. Describe the development and history of the materials. (e.g., The development of CSE workshop was sponsored by a grant from the National Institute of Education. The workshops have been extensively validated in a test revision cycle.) This type of information will lend credibility to the materials. Even if the materials are from a new workshop it would be worthwhile to mention the extensive research that went into their development and the expertise of the developers.
3. Describe the format of the materials.
   - manuals or notebooks, exercises. For example, CSE workshop use a participant notebook which includes readings on various evaluation concepts, individual and team exercises and feedback. A simulation of a hypothetical school district runs throughout the workshop. Therefore participants have a case study in addition to a good reference material to take home at the end of the workshop.
   - pretests and posttests. These may be included, or, if not, you may wish to develop some for the workshop. It is important to assure participants that the tests' purposes are to assess the effectiveness of the session and <u>not</u> the performance of the participants. You do not want participants to feel in-

timidated by thinking they are being assessed. Assure participants that no individual's score will be reported to the sponsor. If, in the initial contact with the sponsor, it was indicated that pre- posttest information would be desired, then group scores could be reported without endangering individual anonymity. Tell the participants if this arrangement was made.

The distribution method of the tests will vary. Some workshops may have one form for a pretest and one form for a posttest. Others, CSE for example, have a couple of parallel forms. Therefore, half of the participants can receive Form A for the pretest and Form B for the posttest while the other half receive the tests in the reverse order. This acts as a counterbalance of the test forms and as a prevention measure for those people who might find that they, though unintentionally, see their neighbor's answer.

participant reaction sheet. Some workshops, such as CSE, include some type of questionnaire aimed at soliciting participants feelings and impressions about various aspects of the workshop, e.g., quality, quantity, and clarity of written material, appropriateness and interest of exercises, usefulness of feedback, amount of discussion and lecture. These questions might pertain to each section or they may be divided into larger categories such as morning session and afternoon session. If the workshop does not include any reaction sheets you may wish to formulate your own.

4. Discuss the workshop objectives. Tell participants the workshop's objectives and the topics to be covered to meet those objectives. This is a good time to conduct a needs assessment for the workshop as was done for this LTP in Exercise 1. The results can help you modify the workshop. This technique of workshop modification will be discussed later in the section on modifying the workshop.

## MODIFYING THE WORKSHOP

### Discovering the Need

All workshops will be most effective if the leader takes into account the needs, intellectual and emotional, of the audience. Since the makeup of each participant group will be slightly different, modifications will have to be made for each workshop session. To suit a particular audience, the leader must have information on a number of areas; how much knowledge participants have on the concepts covered by the workshop, which areas the participants feel are most important and/or interesting, and whether or not the information is relevant to their situation. There are a number of sources from which to obtain this information:

1. *The leader may already possess information on the group's needs.* If the leader is internal, he may already be aware of those workshop sections that will require in-depth coverage and those that can be skimmed, summarized or skipped.
2. *Information may be obtained from the sponsor.* At the initial meeting the sponsor should be able to give the leader some indication of the group's needs and his perception of the workshop's goals. The leader can also ask questions about the group composition, level of skills, and amount of experience and immediate tasks with respect to evaluation.
3. *Pretest data can reveal the group's skill strengths and deficiencies.* Depending on time restrictions, pretests can be scored or quickly skimmed to gain a picture of participant's instructional needs. This review of the pretest can be completed by an assistant or by you while participants are reading an early section of the workshop.

4. *A needs assessment can be conducted.* As suggested earlier, a needs assessment is useful to find out the group's perception of what the priorities of the workshop should be, and to find out in what areas they are most interested.
5. *Ask the participants.* As the workshop progresses, the participants may have, and be willing to give, opinions on such things as the workshop's clarity, relevance, and interest.
6. *Participant reaction sheets can give interim information on group feelings about the workshop.* You may wish to collect any questionnaires during lunch in a one day workshop or at the end of the first day if thesession runs longer. You may learn about feelings participants did not feel comfortable verbalizing to you.

Modification Techniques

Once you are awre of the group's needs, from whatever source, you can modify the workshop based on this information.

Many of the modifications can be made by using pacing techniques. Changing the pace of the workshop includes: rearranging the workshop sections, skimming or skipping sections, and covering some sections in more depth. Pacing techniques will be discussed in greater detail later.

Another useful modification can be made with workshops that include simulations. For example, in the CSE workshops, if the group is homogeneous and is currently working in an evaluation situation, their situation or project can be plugged in and used as the working example instead of the hypothetical school district. For those workshops not containing a simulation, it is still advisable to relate the workshop materials, as much as possible,

to the participant's real situation. This procedure will greatly increase the relevance of, and perhaps the interest of, the participants.

## Leadership Style

The way in which an individual conducts a workshop session is, in large part, a matter of personal style. Some people prefer a more formal style, standing behind a podium to lead a workshop. Others use an informal approach and sit with the participants. Some leaders like to take charge of the session while others feel more at ease if the participants assume more of the responsibility for the running of the session.

Although personal preference plays a part in how an individual leads a workshop, other factors also affect leadership style. These include the nature of the participant group. Some workshops are highly structured and task oriented while others are more informal and rely heavily on discussion. The leader may use different leadership styles when leading these two rather different types of workshops. Similarly, some participant groups feel that they want the leader to present information in a lecture format while others are more comfortable discussing points with the leader.

EXERCISE 3:

Purpose: Participants explore qualities they may wish to exhibit as a leader.

Format: Exercise is done by participant group as a whole.

Directions: Leader asks group to generate as many qualities of an effective workshop leader as they can. These qualities can be both interpersonal and instructional skills.

Written feedback for people who read LTP as a manual: refers to leadership skills section.

## Group Sensitivity

This section of the workshop focuses on specific leadership skills which we believe an effective workshop leader can and should exhibit.

## Sensitivity

At the foundation of all leadership skills is sensitivity to workshop participants. If the workshop is to be successful and enjoyable for participants, the leader must be sensitive to the group's needs and wishes. Sensitivity means the leader not only has to be able to perceive these needs but then be able to take appropriate action.

## Flexibility

Basic to sensitivity is flexibility. Effective leaders are ready and willing to modify the structure of the session as well as their own actions to suit the participants. Although CSE workshop materials are a fairly structured instructional package, we encourage leaders to adapt the materials and their delivery style to suit a particular participant group.

How does a leader know if a change in presentation is necessary?

- *listen to suggestions of participants. They may suggest ways*
- *the leader can best make the material relevant to their group*
- *conduct needs assessment (as described in Exercise 1)*
- *be aware of nonverbal signals. Look at participants gestures, positive facial expressions.*

Nonverbal behavior can express a feeling the workshop participant is unwilling to express verbally. A participant may be unwilling to tell the leader that the pace of the workshop is too slow but he may show that he is bored with

the activity by yawning or frequently looking at the clock.

As we will see later, the leader must not only be sensitive to the nonverbal behavior of others, he must be aware of his own nonverbal behavior as well.

Pacing and Tailoring the Workshop

In addition to group sensitivity the successful workshop leader should apply pacing and discussion leader skills.

Although a workshop can be a failure for a variety of reasons, a major cause is the leader's failure to be sensitive to the knowledge level or sophisitication level of the participant group and to pace the workshop appropriately. Pretests, as found in the CSE workshops are a built in mechanism to help the leader pace the materials.

Accelerating the Pace

If the majority of participants correctly answer questions on an objective, the leader should not ask participants to painstakingly read the section of the workshop pertaining to that objective. Nor should they labor over the exercise. Similarly, if most of the participants have just written a program plan and feel knowledgeable about, and perhaps tired of, program plans, the leader who labors through the section on program planning may have open rebellion on his hands.

There are several options open to the leader to deal with knowledgeable or sophisticated participants. Choosing an appropriate course of action in a given workshop session is a matter of judgment on the part of the leader. The pacing options are:

1. ask participants to skim the section and do the exercise.

2. ask participants to skim the section and disregard the exercise or skim it and read the feedback
3. highlight the important points in the section while participants are consulting their notebooks
4. summarize the section for participants
5. skip the section entirely.

The leader who uses the third and fourth options can ask participants to do the exercise at the end of the section if participants are willing.

The last option, skipping over the section entirely, is not highly recommended. It should only be exercised if the leader is confident that participants thoroughly know the material in the section. Such a judgment should be based on concrete evidence such as pretest results. Even if the leader decides to skip a section, it's highly recommended that he provide a brief summary of the main points of the section.

Slowing the Pace

In general, the leader must carefully assess the situation to determine if the workshop's pace should be slowed down. Some slowing down techniques include:

1. Allow more time for discussion. There are times when participants will be especially interested in a section of the workshop. Perhaps they are currently engaged in the evaluation activity described in the section. If this is the case, then the leader should slow the pace of the workshop and allow more time for group discussion.
2. Allow more time for an exercise. If participants are involved in an exercise, allow them extra time to complete it. Although Leaders' Manual includes suggested times to allow for reading and

exercises, they are only general guidelines and need not be adhered to rigidly.

3. Add relevant exercises from your own experience. It may be worthwhile to include an additional exercise that would be relevant to the objective of the workshop section on which the participants require or desire more information. Perhaps you remember an exercise from a book or class or perhaps the material inspires a new exercise that would be appropriate for the material and group.

Tailoring the Workshop

Properly pacing the workshop is one way to tailor it to suit a particular group. Although each evaluation workshop is a highly structured instructional package, we encourage leaders to use the materials as a base or resource, and make adaptations as necessary.

One might abandon the simulated evaluation situation continued in the workshop and replace it with the real life evaluation situation in the district. Exercises can be changed so they build upon actual evaluation activities. For example, in the CSE workshops, participants can develop measures to answer their own evaluation questions and then specify evaluation designs for each measure.

Discussion Leader Skills

Since discussions are a vital part of any workshop, CSE workshops included, it is important for the leader to stimualate group discussion. There are several group discussion skills successful workshop leaders exhibit, including the following three:

- Recognizing tangents and irrelevancies. It is easy for the discussion to stray from the topic of the workshop. The leader must keep the discussion focused on the subject at hand.
- Clarifiying and restating. The leader should clarify and restate ambiguous points raised in the discussion to ensure that everyone understands the leader. Will frequently find himself saying, "Do you mean . . . ?" or, "Are you saying.....?"
- Asks the right question. One of the leaders' major tasks is to promote discussion. The best method to accomplish this is to ask a question. The right questions facilitate discussion.
- Asking a question is a good way to begin a discussion.
- If someone in the group asks a question, throw the question back to the group. The leader should avoid responding, "Well, I think...." This does not aid discussion and puts the leader in a position of flaunting his knowledge.
- Avoid questions which may be answered by a simple "Yes" or "No" since these won't contribute to the discussion.
- Some specific kinds of questions upon which a workshop leader can rely include:
    - ask for a definition. Who can define evaluation?

- ask a leading question. Who has encountered this particular problem? How did you handle it?
- Ask a controversial question. Should evaluation be linked to accountability?
- Ask for an opinion. What do you think about the problem of confidentiality of data collected during an evaluation?
- Ask for experience. Who has had any experiences conducting an evaluation?
- Ask a provocative question. Do we really need evaluation?

The workshop leader should keep the following suggestions in mind when asking questions:

- Questions should be stated in as brief a form as possible to avoid participants repeatedly asking for clarification
- Questions should be directly related to the topic under consideration The leader must keep participants on the topic, not lead them away from it.
- Questions should be phrased in terms the group will understand. The leader should avoid using sophisticated terminology and "educationese" to impress the group
- Questions should be answerable since it is generally unwise to show participants how ignorant they are. This, however, does not prohibit using a rhetorical question which is directed at the entire group to promote thinking or set a general theme and to which the leader does not expect an answer.

FEEDBACK SKILLS

An essential part of any workshop is the interactions that develop between participants and between participants and the leader. Some workshops have built interactions in by including structured discussions as part of the activities. Even without being built-in, there will always be some intereaction between the leader and participants. It would be a very unusual workshop that did not call for the leader to be involved in some sort of communication with the participant group.

An important factor in effective communication is the proper use of feedback. Feedback is a communication with another that expresses the receiver's perception of what the giver has tried to communicate. Feedback may be positive or negative and can be communicated in several ways that will be discussed later.

We all give feedback when we interact with others so it may seem that there is nothing to learn. But, actually a lot of skill is involved in giving accurate, effective feedback. In the role of a workshop leader, you will find feedback skills useful for responding to questions, answers, and comments during discussions with the group of which individuals, ("Thank you, that was a very good comment," "I appreciate your sharing this story with the group but I think it might be best to return to our discussion on leadership qualities."), and useful during intereactions with participants while they complete individual or team exercises. ("I think you may be interpreting those directions in a way that, though understandable, is not how the workshop developers meant to do the exercise.") Awareness of these skills will also help you receive feedback

from the participants; that is, how to give feedback to feedback ("Though I'm sorry the workshop is boring to you, I appreciate your willingness to share these feelings so that I can try to change the situation.")

There are a number of general guidelines for giving feedback. Some of these are:

1. Feedback should be behavior focused rather than person focused. If a participant responded to a question correctly, a response from the leader might be, "From her answer, Ms. Jones is obviously a smart person." A better response might be, "The answer given by Ms. Jones was very good because it included all the important factors." Likewise a negative behavior is also best handled by addressing the behavior. If Ms. Jones is being disruptive, one comment from the leader might be, "I'm afraid you are being a disruptive person." A better comment would be, "I'm sorry but your actions x, y, and z are disruptive to this workshop."

2. Feedback should be descriptive of the behaviors rather than judgmental or interpretive. If a participant is being disruptive, it is better to state that his non-task comments seem to be preventing the team from completing an exercise. This would be preferable to telling the participant that he appears to be annoying the other team members.

3. Feedback should acknowledge the speaker. Thank the person who responded, even if he had to be called on and coaxed. If possible, use the person's name (name tags make this easier in an unfamiliar group). This gives a personal touch and may help a person feel more positive about responding and probably make it more likely he will do it again.

4. Feedback should focus on the specific situation. For example, if there is a problem with the workshop session, it is better to say so than to say something like, "Sometimes workshops find themselves in a difficult situation."

5. Feedback should try to begin with a positive statement, even if the feedback is negative. If Mr. Smith gave an incorrect answer, appropriate feedback might be, "Thank-you for answering the question Mr. Smith, but I was looking for . . . ."

6. Feedback should include new information. If a participant makes a reasonable statement or response to a question, thank him for the comment or answer, acknowledge its correctness, and then, if possible, add any other worthwhile information you may have on the subject. But don't overload and turn your response into a lecture if you're supposed to be engaged in a discussion.

## TYPES OF FEEDBACK

The specific feedback techniques that are usually employed can be viewed as ranging on a continuum from nonverbal responses to paraphrasing responses.

Nonverbal. This is a very effective means of feedback since many people feel more comfortable expressing themselves behaviorally than verbally (even if they don't realize it). Nonverbal feedback may be expressed by such means as body posture, facial expression, eye focus, gestures. Since nonverbal communication is always used, most of us have certain expectations about the meanings of many behaviors. For example, some nonverbal behaviors which

are usually considered positive include: nodding the head, looking attentive (sitting up straight, giving eye contact). We'd usually translate these behaviors to mean attentiveness, interest, pleasure. Commonly agreed on negative behaviors include: frowning, yawning, looking away from speaker, tapping foot. We often take these behaviors to mean unhappiness, boredom, irritation. These commonly held beliefs of what certain nonverbal behaviors mean brings us to the one big problem with using nonverbal feedback as an indicator of feelings. Nonverbal behaviors do not always mean the same thing by the same people. For example, slouching in a chair might be a means of expressing a negative response to the speaker, but on the other hand, some people just like to slouch even when they are being very attentive. A frown, usually considered negative, is merely an expression of concentration for some people.

Since there is a potential for misinterpretation, it is important to look at more than one nonverbal behavior and to observe the behaviors over time. One yawn might be a sign of tiredness, but constant yawning accompanied by finger tapping and eye roving either means the person is about to go under from exhaustion and is desperately trying to stay awake, or, more likely, is desperately bored. You may wish to try and draw this person into the discussion, or, if he is expressing other kinds of feelings, such as hostility, you may wish to leave him alone. If a number of people in your audience are displaying these same characteristics, it may be time to change something. You might ask the participants how they feel about the current reading exercise or discussion. Or you might "feel" the atmosphere clearly enough to say something like, "It seems this portion of the workshop might be boring to some of you. Perhaps I could just summarize some of the points

in the section and then we could move on. How do you feel about that?"

From the leader's standpoint there are a number of nonverbal behaviors which are recommended:

1. Don't stand behind a table or podium. A podium can give an impression of "speaker" and listeners. A better workshop atmosphere is one in which participants feel comfortable asking questions and taking part in discussions. A table, ghough not as lethal as a podium, is still a physical barrier and can also perpetuate the me-you feeling which a good leader always tries to eliminate. If there is a table, try sitting on it.

2. Try to control gestures. Not only are gestures distracting, they can be interpreted for nervousness even if that isn't the case. An occasional gesture for emphasis is acceptable, but, in general, keep hands and feet quiet, though not rigid.

3. Walk around. Of course you will want to walk around while participants are working on exercises to be of assistance and to observe any team interactions, and when participants are reading to keep a check on the pace of the workship. You should also walk around when speaking. It is not recommended to put your back to participants but walk up to the first tables or desks, walk to the periphery, i.e., be in their territory.

4. Be attentive when someone speaks. Look at the speaker and give eye contact. Try not to be thinking about how to introduce the next section of the workshop. Nod once in awhile if you agree with the point being made. Everyone likes to think someone is really listening.

Minimum Verbal Acknowledgement. These behaviors are mostly meant to acknowledge that you are being attentive. They include such minimal phrases as "uh huh," "yes, I see what you mean, that's a good point," "I'm not sure if I understand, tell me more." Voice becomes important at this point. Be aware of tone, speed, and loudness. All these aspects can be expressive even if you are just saying a brief phrase.

Summarizing. This is a technique for the recipient to clarify what the speaker said and to make sure both agree on the meaning of the statements. If the participant has rambled on or was unclear, this technique is especially useful to clarify what was said for the benefit of the other participants. For example, "Thank you. Mr. Jones has just given us a number of interesting strategies for dealing with a biased group. These points were . . . . ."

Paraphrasing. This technique goes one step beyond summarizing by putting the speaker's comments in your own words. This is a more difficult skill since it requires a very clear understanding of what the speaker said. However, this is also why the technique is valuable. If the recipient can paraphrase the speaker correctly, then both are sure there was a good understanding of the communication. This is especially useful when mistakes might be costly in terms of time and understanding, or when strong feeling in either person increases the probability that comments may be misunderstood.

EXERCISE 4

Purpose: Make participants aware of verbal and nonverbal feedback.

Format: Team exercise

1 team member = giver

2nd team member = receiver

3rd team member = observer

Giver: talks for three minutes on one of the following topics or a topic of his/her choice:

1. experiences in attending/giving workshops
2. how a leader contributed to the success or failure of a workshop giver attended

Receiver: listens carefully; can ask questions for clarification but should not assume the role of the giver

Observer: attends to verbal and nonverbal feedback between giver and receiver; does not speak

At the end of the three-minute session, the observer takes two minutes and reports what (s)he observed to the giver and receiver.

Next the team members switch roles or rotate so there is a new giver, a new receiver and a new observer. The five minute session is repeated. Finally, team members rotate again for the last five minute session. Participants then discusses dynamics of feedback with leader and entire group.

Written feedback for people who read LTP as a manual: refer back to feedback section of package.

Group Dynamics

Even if the leader is sensitive and skilled in pacing the workshop session, in leading discussions and in providing feedback, problems with individuals or the group as a whole are likely to arise. The leader must be able to cope with these problems to assure the success of the workshop. The coping strategies outlined in this section are basically methods of giving feedback to individual participants and to the group as a whole.

Before the leader uses any of the recommended strategies (s)he should try to understand the reasons for the individual's or group's behavior. These include:

• Status achieved from role behavior. An individual may engage in a certain behavior or play a particular role because of the status he attains from the group by playing that role.

• Descrepancy between the individual's goals and the group's goals. The individual does not feel concerned about the goals of the workshop or the group because they are not important for him. In fact the participant's goals may vary widely from those set for the group. One participant may be interested in listening to what other participants have to say, hoping to profit from their experience and ideas. Another may only be interested in fostering his own opinions and ideas on other participants. A third participant may be participating only for the pleasure of interacting socially with people in the district he doesn't see very often. Although each of these individuals may attain their goal during the course of the workshop, there is no guarantee that the goals of the workshop will be attained.

• Descrepancy between the group's goals and the leader's goals. The leader may have goals for the workshop session which are quite different from those held by the group. The group may be more interested in socializing while the leader has a precise set of instructional goals (s)he is attempting to attain. In general the group's will can be very strong and the leader should avoid antagonizing the participants. The leader should be flexible and work out compromises so that both (s)he and the participants are happy.

In general, if the leader is practicing all the skills mentioned to this point, the participant group will usually support the leader. The group can be the leader's best ally. If the leader is having problems with individuals who are "over-participants" or "anti-participants", the leader can appeal to the group to solve the problem by asking, "What does the group wish to do?" If allowed to do so the group can solve many of the leader's problems.

## Problems with Individuals

As the leader proceeds, not the least of his problems will be that of dealing with various kinds of participants within the group. Generally speaking problems with participants fall into these groups:

- over participants
- under-aparticipants
- anti-participants
- others

### Over-Participants

In the category of over-participants, the leader will usually encounter the following types of participants:

- Talks too much. This person always has something to say about everything whether it is relevant or not.
- Overly helpful person. This individual has the answer before everyone else or has a point to contribute to help the group. Although he means well, his constant answers and comments prevent other from participating in the discussion.
- Rambler. This participant doesn't know when to stop and throws in everything he knows about a topic whether it is relevant or not.

Feedback Strategies for Over-Participants

When the over-participant pauses for breath, the leader should briefly summarize where the discussion stands and ask others for comments. The leader can assure the over-participant that his or her help is appreciated but that others must have a chance to contribute to the discussion.

Under-Participants

In the category of under-participants, the leader will likely encounter the following types of persons:

- Reserved or shy. This individual wants to participate but hesitates to do so.
- Just wants to listen. This participant is interested but does not want to talk.
- Bored. This participant is not interested in the workshop and does not wish to participate.
- Does not desire to help others. This participant is quiet because he probably regards the workshop as a competitive situation and does not wish to compete with other participants.

Feedback Strategies for Under-Participants

In general the leader should try to discover the reasons for under-participation. If it is widespread the leader may want to do a lot more activities in three or six member teams or change the composition of the teams. For the shy person, the leader may ask questions (s)he feels that person can answer and look in that person's direction frequently. For the bored person the leader might ask for a personal experience or seek out an area of interest that will draw the bored participant into the discussion during a coffee break.

Anti-Participants

Individuals in this category include the following types:

- Arguer. This individual takes issue with almost anything the leader says.
- Obstinate person. This participant will not accept the opinion of other participants because he has missed the point of what they are saying:

Off-the-subject:

Griper. This person always finds something to complain about -- such as his job, family, colleagues and interjects this into the conversation.

Psychological Advice-Seeker

- Nit Picker. This person finds and keeps pointing out minor errors in the materials and/or the leader's delivery
- Head Hunter. This participant is out to get the leader. He attacks the leader on a personal level.

## Feedback Strategies for Anti-Participants

Anti-participants cause the group to stray from the workshop materials and the arguer, nit picker and head hunter can destroy the leader's credibility if not handled effectively. The leader must intervene quickly. Restate the point for the person who may have missed it. If after several re-statements the person still doesn't get the point or refuses to get the point, the leader should note that the individual's comments are welcome but the group as a whole must focus on the activity at hand and move along. The leader should, however, recognize any legitimate points the individual may have. It is also a good idea to ask the group for any reactions or comments to points raised by an individual. If the participant begins to argue and try to destroy the leader's credibility by raising technical points beyond the scope of the session, the leader should tell them that those points are beyond the scope of the discussion. Perhaps the leader and this individual could discuss them after the session. The leader should always rely on his or her natural authority as a leader. For the off-the-subject person and psychological advice seeker (someone who wants to know what to do with a particular, unrelated problem) the leader should acknowledge the comment, and get group back on tasks by summarizing activities to date and continuing. The leader should also remember that the group can be an ally. The group will probably get bored with the anti-participant and annoyed because this person is taking up the group's time. The group will likely have little sympathy for the anti-participant and may actually help the leader tone down the anti-participant.

## Other Problems with Participants

In the "other" category of participants the leader will probably encounter the following types of persons:

- Side Conversationalist. This individual talks to others around him while the leader is talking or during group discussion.
- Personality Attacker. This person attacks people's personalities. Two participants can also interject personal conflicts into the discussion.

For the side conversationalist, the leader should pause. Let other participants listen to the conversation. This usually gets across the idea that the side conversation is disrupting the workshop. Or the leader can ask the side conversationalists if they would please put their efforts back to the task.

For the personality attacker, the leader can request that personalities be left out of the discussion.

Problems with the Group

As the workshop progresses, the leader may soon realize that a problem may exist within the group as a whole. Problems with groups generally fall into the following categories:

- Hostile Groups
- Dense Groups
- Fun -and-Game Groups

Hostile Groups: In general the leader should try to find out why they're hostile. If the group is hostile at the beginning of the session, something is forced, they haven't "bought in." The leader must try to set the situation right and the leader should acknowledge the hostile feeling. Find out the hidden agenda. See what the group wants to do. Be flexible. If hostility appears later in the

session, the cause may be frustration or confusion or boredom. The leader should clarify the points being made or push the learning on to a point of clearing or take a break.

Sleepy Groups: The cause may be too much reading and not enough active participation. This often happens right after lunch. If possible the leader should pace the workshop so that an exercise will come after lunch. If a particular reading selection if fairly long, the leader can divide it into smaller sections or summarize the reading selection for the participants.

Dense Groups: No matter how clearly the leader states the task or how often he or she repeats it, the group just won't understand. This may amount to task avoidance. The trust level may be too low or the task may be difficult enough to be threatening, the group doesn't feel prepared. The leader should try to target the group's feeling and bring it out in the open.

Fun-and-Game Groups: The group is having such a good time that they are not staying on task. It is important to keep the group on task and moving along. The leader should briefly summarize what has happened so far, introduce the next topic and limit the time spent on a reading selection or an exercise. The leader can tell the group they will have x minutes to . . . and stress the value of having a case

study to refer to at the completion of the workshop. To achieve this goal, the group must stay on task. The workshops cover a great deal of content in a two-day period. The fun-and-games atmosphere can sometimes be avoided if at the beginning the leader stresses that this is a highly structured work session. The leader can also take advantage of this atmosphere and utilize it to some degree to make the session enjoyable.

EXERCISE: ROLE PLAYING PERSONALITIES

Directions:

This exercise includes six role playing situations which appear on the following pages. Four situations involve an interaction between the leader and an individual. The other two situations involve an interaction between the leader and a group of participants.

You will be playing the role of the leader, an individual participant or a participant within a group.

Directions to the Leader of the LTP

This exercise may be conducted in a number of ways. For small groups you may wish to have the whole group observe two people role playing (situations 1-4) or the whole group involved in the role playing (situations 5 and 6). With large number of participants you may find it easier to have them split into smaller groups.

In any case, select or ask for two people per group to role play. Then have one in the pair choose a number, 1-6, and use that situation, or just choose a character that seems interesting to him. Give the pair (or the group if situation 5 or 6 is chosen) three minutes to role play. Follow this by a group discussion about the techniques used by the leader to resolve the problem poised by the character or group. Discuss alternative reactions and behaviors that might have also been appropriate and effective to employ. Repeat this procedure with another pair of people to role play until you think they've had enough, time runs out or everyone has had a turn.

1) Role: Head Hunter

Personality:

- hostile
- came to workshop because it was mandated by the superintendent
- would rather attend to important work at the office
- doesn't like the other workshop participants
- doesn't like the leader's shoes

Role Playing Situation

The head hunter challenges the leader by saying:

"Notice that you've left multiple regression out of the analysis discussion. Perhaps you're not as aware of this statistical technique as are those of us more directly involved in evaluation."

or

"This workshop doesn't tell me how to evaluate any other program but an educational program. It is very limited in focus"

or

any head hunting comment you choose.

First Speaker: headhunter